

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01

/059 W

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R 201809Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0897

INFO AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

USMISSION USBERLIN

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, GW

SUBJECT: CDU/CSU CHANCELLOR CANDIDATE DECISION: ACT
THREE

REF: BONN 7746, BONN 6971

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE FINAL ACT OF CHOOSING A CDU/CSU
CHANCELLOR CANDIDATE FOR NEXT YEAR'S ELECTIONS TOOK
PLACE AT A MEETING OF THE TWO PRESIDiums JUNE 19.

AFTER THE MEETING A STATEMENT WAS ISSUED WHICH EXPRESSED
HALF HEARTED CSU ENDORSEMENT OF KOHL AS THE UNION PAR-
TIES' CANDIDATE. WHILE THE LACK OF THE BAVARIAN PARTY'S
ENTHUSIASM FOR KOHL IS WELL KNOWN, THE FACT THAT THE
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CSU CHOSE TO MAKE ITS RELUCTANCE EXPLICIT IN THE STATE-

MENT IS LIKELY TO HURT KOHL IN THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN.
THE TWO PARTIES AGREED ON THE COMMON GOAL OF PREVENTING
THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SOCIALIST SOCIETY IN THE FRG AND
AGREED TO FORM A JOINT GOVERNMENT IF THEY WIN AN ABSO-
LUTE MAJORITY NEXT YEAR. END SUMMARY

1. THE FINAL ACT OF THE SELECTION PROCESS IN CHOOSING
THE CDU/CSU CHANCELLOR CANDIDATE FOR THE 1976 BUNDESTAG
ELECTIONS TOOK PLACE JUNE 19. THE PRESIDUIMS OF THE
CDU AND CSU MET IN BONN AT THE BAVARIAN STATE REPRES-
ENTATIVE'S OFFICE. FOLLOWING THE MEETING, FORMER CHAN-
CELLOR KIESINGER ANNOUNCED THAT THE CSU HAD AGREED TO
SUPPORT CDU NATIONAL CHAIRMAN HELMUT KOHL AS THE JOINT
CHANCELLOR CANDIDATE IN NEXT YEAR'S ELECTIONS. HOWEVER,
CSU ENDORSEMENT OF KOHL WAS GIVEN RELUCTANTLY. IN THE
JOINT STATEMENT THE CSU MAINTAINED THAT IT ACKNOWLEDGED
THE CDU'S PROPOSAL THAT KOHL BE THE CHANCELLOR CANDIDATE
AND ALTHOUGH THE CSU WAS STILL CONVINCED THAT FRANZ
JOSEF STRAUSS WOULD BE THE APPROPRIATE CANDIDATE (DER
GEEIGNETE KANDIDAT), THE BAVARIAN PARTY WOULD SUPPORT
KOHL IN THE INTEREST OF THEIR COMMON CONCERN.
THE STATEMENT SAID THAT THE TWO PARTIES WERE IN AGREE-
MENT ON THE COMMON GOAL IN THE 1976 NATIONAL ELECTIONS
(I.E., THROUGH A CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT TO HINDER THE
DEVELOPMENT OF A SOCIALIST SOCIETY IN THE FRG). THERE
WAS ALSO AGREEMENT TO JOIN TOGETHER IN FORMING A NEW
GOVERNMENT SHOULD THE UNION PARTIES OBTAIN AN ABSOLUTE
MAJORITY NEXT YEAR.

2. THE FACT THAT THE CSU PUBLICLY STATED ITS RELUCTANCE
IN ENDORSING KOHL CAME AS A SURPRISE TO MOST OBSERVERS.
IT WAS CLEAR THAT FRANZ JOSEF STRAUSS' PARTY WAS LESS
THAN WILDLY ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE KOHL CANDIDACY. ONE
OF THE PARTICIPANTS AT THE JUNE 10 AND JUNE 19 MEET-
INGS TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER THAT STRAUSS' ATTITUDE
DURING THE NEGOTIATIONS IMPLIED THAT HE FELT THAT IF
GERMANY COULD NOT HAVE THE BEST CHANCELLOR (STRAUSS),

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IT MIGHT JUST AS WELL HAVE THE SECOND BEST CHANCELLOR, HELMUT SCHMIDT. IT WAS CLEAR DURING THE NEGOTIATIONS THAT STRAUSS AND THE CSU HAVE NOT GIVEN UP THE IDEA OF FORMING A FOURTH PARTY, BUT NOW WILL WAIT UNTIL AT LEAST AFTER THE 1976 ELECTIONS. THE CSU ARGUES THAT THE PRESENT CDU/CSU ALLIANCE STANDS LITTLE CHANCE OF OBTAINING AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY AND THAT THE FORMATION OF A NATIONAL CSU PARTY WOULD PICK UP ENOUGH VOTES TO MAKE AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY POSSIBLE. THE CDU DISAGREES, FEELING THAT THE CSU WOULD JUST TAKE AWAY VOTES FROM THE CDU, AND HAS WARNED STRAUSS THAT IF HE WERE TO CREATE A NATIONAL CSU, THE CDU WOULD BE FORCED TO MOVE INTO BAVARIA

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WHICH COULD BE COSTLY TO STRAUSS.

3. BOTH THE SPD AND FDP WERE QUICK TO SEIZE UPON THE CSU'S RELUCTANT ENDORSEMENT OF KOHL. THE SPD DESCRIBED THE CSU ACTION AS AN INDICATION OF DISUNITY IN THE UNION ALLIANCE, AND THE FDP DESCRIBED THE RESULTS OF THE MEETING AS A DISMANTLING OF THE UNION PARTIES' UNITY.

4. THERE CAN BE LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE CSU'S HALF-HEARTED ENDORSEMENT OF HELMUT KOHL WILL HURT HIS CANDI-

DACY. THIS PUBLIC INDICATION OF DISUNITY WITHIN THE
OPPOSITION WILL SERVE AS AN TTRACTIVE TARGET FOR THE
COALITION PARTIES IN NEXT YEAR'S CAMPAIGN.
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